52 Regent Street | Eccles | M30 0BP
www.forhousing.co.uk/how-to-contact-us | 0300 123 55 22

Service Charges April 2025 – March 2026

Frequently asked questions

Why have I received this letter?

Your tenancy agreement states that we use a variable service charge that can be subject to change. Service charges are fees that you and other tenants pay to cover the costs of services and maintenance for shared spaces and facilities. This can include things like cleaning, gardening, lifts, heating, and lighting in communal areas. These charges help ensure that the building is well-maintained and safe for everyone living there.

According to the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, ForHousing must send you a summary of the service charges within six months after the end of each 12-month period. The letter you received gives a full breakdown, showing how much things actually cost compared to what was planned for the year from April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026.

I pay service charges, so why haven't I received a letter?

If you haven't received a service charge statement, this is likely because you pay a fixed service charge rather than a variable service charge.

Variable service charges are adjusted to reflect the actual cost of providing services, which is why an annual statement is produced.

Fixed service charges are not adjusted in this way, so an annual actual costs statement is not issued. If you're unsure which type of service charge applies to you, please get in touch and we'll be happy to help.

What is a variable service charge?

A variable service charge is a charge that can go up or down each year, depending on the actual cost of providing services to your home and community.

We set your service charges using an estimated budget at the start of the year. At the end of the year, we compare this estimate with the actual cost of providing the services. If the actual cost is higher or lower than estimated, there may be an amount to pay or a credit due.

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Any difference will be included in your next service charge estimate, which you'll receive around February 2027.

What does this mean for me?

We know service charges are important and want to make sure they are clear, consistent and fair. The service charge statement you've received relates to the actual cost of services provided between April 2025 and March 2026.

If you've paid more than the actual cost of the services provided, the difference will be credited to your future service charges. If you've paid less than the actual cost, the difference will be included in your future service charges.

Any adjustment will be reflected in your next service charge estimate, which you'll receive in February 2027.

What do I need to do? Do I need to increase or decrease my payment to recover this surplus or deficit?

No, you do not need to do anything at this stage, the letter and breakdown of your charges are a formal notification to inform you of any under or over payments for the year April 2025 – March 2026.

This one-off adjustment will be included in your next service charge estimate, which you'll receive in February 2027 and will apply from April 2027.

What happens if I can't pay the new service charge amount?

We want to work with you to understand any difficulties you may have in paying your service charges or if you need some extra support in managing your money. If you would like to discuss your finances with us, please complete an online enquiry form or call us on 0300 123 5522. We'll do all we can to support you.

Why is the actual cost different from what I was charged?

At the start of each year, we estimate how much shared services will cost based on the information available at the time.

Sometimes the actual cost of providing services is higher or lower than we expected. This can happen because of things like changes in energy prices, inflation, contractor costs, or the amount of work needed during the year.

At the end of the year, we compare the estimated costs with the actual costs so we can see whether there is a credit due or a balance to pay.

Why don't I receive a refund straight away?

Each year we compare the service charges you paid with the actual cost of providing your services.

If you've paid too much, the difference is applied as a credit to your future service charges. If you've paid too little, the balance is included in your future service charges.

This means all adjustments are applied consistently and helps avoid you receiving unexpected bills or needing to make larger repayments over a short period of time.

We will always write to you to explain how any adjustment has been calculated and how it will affect your future charges.

Which are the important numbers for me to look at?

The orange-outlined column on the right side of the accounts (on pages 3 and 4, if it applies) shows how the budgeted and actual costs affect your weekly charges from April 2026.

What is the difference between Housing Benefit Eligible and Housing Benefit Ineligible?

Housing Benefit Eligible: If you receive Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, some of your service charges will be covered by it.

Housing Benefit Ineligible: Some service charges are not covered by Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, meaning you'll have to pay for those yourself.

Usually, charges for things shared by everyone in the building, like cleaning communal areas or cleaning windows, are eligible. But things you use personally, like heating, water, and electricity, are ineligible, so Housing Benefit or Universal Credit won't pay for them.

How are you calculating my weekly cost based on the yearly figures?

Usually, if you have access to a service, even if you don't use it, the cost is shared equally among all the homes that have access to it. So, your weekly cost is a portion of the total annual cost, divided among everyone who has access to the service.

What support can I access if I'm struggling with money?

You are our priority, and we will do everything we can to support you.

For instance, we can help with making sure you're receiving all the financial support that you're entitled to, including Universal Credit and Housing Benefit. We can also support with everything from contacting utility suppliers, giving advice on budgeting, affordable credit options or managing debt. We also have dedicated Money Advisors who can help with debt advice and solutions.

If you're struggling with debt, ill health or other issues that affect your tenancy, then our skilled and experienced Tenancy Support and Sustainment Officers can offer valuable help, advice, and support to get you back on track.

There's also lots of additional support that you can access via the ForHousing website – from accessing local food banks to how to contact Citizens Advice.

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I am a new tenant, does the surplus or deficit still apply, or will this be adjusted based on the date I started my tenancy?

Yes, this still applies, the services are provided to your scheme, home or estate and not your tenancy.

What is a Management Charge?

Please refer to the brief description of services explained below.

Description of services explained

The table below explains the services that may appear on your statement. You can use it to understand what each service is and what you are being charged for.

Please note that not all services apply to everyone. If services apply to you, you'll see the figures in the orange-outlined column on the right side of your statement.

We understand that there is a lot of information included, and we have done our best to simplify it. However, if you have any questions or need us to explain anything in more detail, please don't hesitate to reach out. Our friendly Income Management Team is here to assist you at 0300 123 5522.

Communal Scheme Costs – Housing Benefit/Universal Credit will pay for these services.

Item	Description
Support team	The Supported Housing team is available to help you live independently, offering housing related support, tailored to your needs. The team make sure the buildings where you live are safe and have a focus on your wellbeing. They help get the right services to support you.
Housing Proactive	Using Housing Proactive (provided by Alertacall) you can report repairs and anti-social behaviour, send messages to ForHousing and get updates. You can also let us know you are OKEachDay.
Out of hours contract - communal	Astraline is your emergency alarm service and operates 24/7 within the communal areas, every day of the year. In an emergency, the team will respond as quickly as possible, contact emergency services or someone you trust, and work with you to ensure you feel safe and supported. If you live in a block, the system is also connected to your smoke alarm.
Cleaning cost	**Extra care homes** -You receive daily cleaning that includes emptying bins, vacuuming and mopping floors, wiping surfaces, and disinfecting toilets, kitchenettes, and laundry areas. Each week or every few months, deeper cleaning is carried out, such as spot-cleaning carpets and furniture, cleaning appliances, and dusting. Scooter rooms and

	entrances are also kept tidy, with litter picked up and bins emptied when needed. **Supported homes**- You receive cleaning throughout the week that includes emptying bins, vacuuming and mopping floors, wiping surfaces, and disinfecting toilets, kitchenettes, and laundry areas. Each week or every few months, deeper cleaning is carried out, such as spot-cleaning carpets and furniture, cleaning appliances, and dusting. Scooter rooms and entrances are also kept tidy, with litter picked up and bins emptied when needed. **Low-rise blocks -** Each week, shared areas are cleaned to maintain safety and comfort. This includes removing litter from outdoor spaces, sweeping and mopping floors and stairwells, deodorising bin rooms, wiping down doors, handrails, skirting boards, and light fittings, and removing cobwebs, graffiti, and scuff marks. Windows in shared areas (like entrances, corridors, and lounges) are cleaned inside and out every three months.
Building Safety	**High-rise blocks** -The Building Safety team works Monday to Friday, from 8am to 4pm. They help keep shared areas clean and safe by cleaning foyers, lifts, and bin rooms daily; cleaning all communal areas weekly; reporting any hazards; and deep cleaning and machine-buffing landings every three months. **Low-rise blocks** - The Building Safety Team are responsible for carrying out safety checks including weekly and monthly tests on communal fire alarm systems and emergency lights.
Water rates – communal	Water is used in shared areas such as communal toilets, communal kitchens, and sprinkler systems where applicable. It helps keep these spaces clean, powers appliances, and supports garden care.
Energy charges - communal gas	Gas is used to heat shared spaces like corridors and lounges and provide hot water.
Energy charges - communal electricity	Electricity is used to power lighting and equipment in shared spaces like door entry systems, entrances, lifts and laundry rooms. This helps keep communal areas safe, well-lit, and working properly.
Pest control / refuse disposal	The removal of, or prevention of, pests in communal areas. Shared bins are inspected and cleaned weekly to maintain hygiene standards. Any fly-tipping is reported and removed promptly, and bin storage areas are kept organised, safe, and easy for residents to use.
Gardening and grounds maintenance	This service helps keep shared outdoor spaces clean, safe, and pleasant. It may include regular grass cutting, trimming and care of shrubs, planting seasonal flowers, and spraying to prevent weeds.
Catering Provision	The cost of providing you with a two-course meal each day, so you have access to healthy, nutritious food in a friendly and social setting.

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Service and maintenance - Housing Benefit/Universal Credit will pay for these services.

Item	Description
CCTV / access control and door entry	Routine servicing is carried out on door entry systems and automatic gates, if installed near your home, to make sure they operate safely and reliably. Communal block entry systems and CCTV are regularly maintained to support secure access and effective monitoring
Fire alarm, emergency lighting and firefighting equipment	To keep the building safe in case of fire, fire alarms (in some homes and shared areas) and firefighting equipment are regularly inspected and maintained. Systems such as emergency lighting, dry risers, smoke extractors and sprinklers are checked to ensure they function properly during emergencies.
Lift maintenance and insurance	We carry out legally required safety checks on lifting equipment including hoists, standing aids and passenger lifts. Lifts are also regularly serviced to make sure they run smoothly and reliably for your daily use
Legionella risk assessment	The cost of a legionella risk assessment for the year, we must prevent and control the risk of legionella in communal stored water systems.
Equipment repairs and replacements	The cost of any new equipment bought, repaired or rental of laundry equipment so we can give you access to washing machines and dryers within your block/scheme.
TV aerial repairs	We carry out annual maintenance of the communal TV and radio signal systems to make sure they're safe and in good working order. This also includes routine inspections and repairs along with the replacement of parts when needed.
Communal room decorations	The cost of any decoration works in communal areas at your block/scheme.
Warden call – service and maintenance	The cost of any day-to-day repairs and providing an annual service contract for the emergency call system at your scheme in the year.
Electric vehicle	Electric vehicle chargers are available at some schemes to support tenants who own electric cars. The chargers are maintained regularly and may require registration or access approval.
Lightning protection	The cost of doing a test to ensure your building is protected from lightning
Height safe annual safety visits	The cost of a yearly inspection to confirm your building meets essential safety standards.

Essential building systems - Housing Benefit/Universal Credit will pay for these services

Item	Description
Plant, furniture & equipment	A contribution to the cost of replacing items in the communal area, such as door entry systems and fire alarms where applicable. The cost is then split over a number of years based on its estimated life.

Warden call equipment	A contribution to the cost of replacing the warden call system. The cost is then split over a number of years based on its estimated life.

Management charges and other income - Housing Benefit/Universal Credit will pay for these services

Item	Description
Management charge	This is our fee for organising and managing the services provided to your scheme. It helps cover activities such as arranging contracts, managing services and administering service charge accounts. This charge relates to services that may be covered by Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.
Prior year (credit due) / money owed eligible	This shows any credit due or money owed from previous years 2023/24 for services that are covered by Housing Benefit or Universal Credit. These amounts are carried forward and included in your current service charge account.
Total eligible services	This shows the total cost of services that may be covered by Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.
Other income	The income for any other monies received in relation to communal areas, for example guest room hire.
Total eligible service charges charged in year	This shows the total amount charged across all homes in your scheme for services that may be covered by Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.
Total eligible (credit due) / money owed	This shows whether the amount charged for eligible services was higher or lower than the actual cost of providing them. If this shows a credit, it means we owe you money. If money is owed, the balance will be included in your future service charges and explained in your next service charge estimate.

Services not covered by Housing Benefit / Universal Credit

Item	Description
Out of hours contract	Astraline is your emergency alarm service and operates 24/7, every day of the year. In an emergency, the team will respond as quickly as possible, contact emergency services or someone you trust, and work with you to

	ensure you feel safe and supported. If you live in a block, the system is also connected to your smoke alarm.
Support team	The Supported Housing Team helps customers live independently by providing advice, wellbeing support, and access to other services. As this support is provided directly to individuals rather than relating to the maintenance or management of the building, it is not eligible for Housing Benefit service charge support.

Personal charges - Services not covered by Housing Benefit / Universal Credit

Item	Description
Energy charges - personal heating	Where we provide heating for personal use as part of your tenancy where there is no individual gas meter this is the cost for gas apportioned to your home.
Water charges - communal laundry facilities	Water supply used in the laundry room.
Catering Provision	The cost of providing you with a two-course meal each day, so you have access to healthy, nutritious food in a friendly and social setting. Meals are considered a personal expense rather than a housing-related service. The government set out rule each year on what housing benefits can help pay for, the ineligible meal cost is currently limited at £26 per week.
Management charge	This is our fee for managing the services provided to your scheme or building. The charge helps cover things such as arranging services, managing contracts, handling service charge accounts and making sure services are delivered. This management charge relates to services that are **not covered by Housing Benefit or Universal Credit** and is usually calculated as 15% of the total cost of those services.
Prior year (credit due)/money owed ineligible	This shows any credit due or money owed from previous years 2023/24 for services that are not covered by Housing Benefit or Universal Credit. These amounts are carried forward and included in your current service charge account.

Total ineligible services	This shows the total cost of services that are not covered by Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.
Total ineligible service charges charged in year	This shows the total amount charged across all homes in your scheme for services that are not covered by Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.
Total service charges charged in year (credit due) / money owed	This shows the overall difference between the amount charged and the actual cost of providing services to your scheme or home. If this shows a credit, it means we owe you money. If money is owed, it will be included in your future service charges and explained in your next service charge estimate.